

Vaccinate against measles

9 March 2015

Future outbreaks of measles can only be prevented by vaccination.

"Education needs to be directed at both [healthcare providers](#) and parents."

An article published in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* examined reasons people are hesitant to vaccinate.

Provided by Wiley

In 2012, an imported case from Thailand led to a large [measles](#) outbreak in New South Wales, with 168 identified cases.

Ninety-five of the cases had not been vaccinated appropriately and 32 of these cases reported vaccine refusal as the reason for not being vaccinated.

"Active vaccine refusal is a significant issue and leaves a large group of children at unnecessary risk of measles infection and associated complications such as pneumonia, otitis media, encephalitis and death," said co-author Blake Dawson from the University of Queensland, currently based at the Gold Coast University Hospital.

A 1998 article published in the *Lancet* proposing a link between MMR vaccination and autism led to many parents losing confidence in the MMR vaccine.

"However, studies after the 1998 article consistently showed no evidence to support an association between MMR vaccination and autism, and issues of ethical misconduct with the original study led to the *Lancet* fully retracting the article in 2010," Dr Dawson said.

"The opinion of healthcare providers is highly valued by parents seeking information about vaccines and communication with parents is fundamental in addressing vaccine hesitancy.

"Strategies such as reminder systems for patients and catch-up plans for overdue vaccinations can be used in addition to providing parents with resources that counter anti-vaccination messages.

APA citation: Vaccinate against measles (2015, March 9) retrieved 16 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-vaccinate-measles.html>

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